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SCIENCE & MEDICINE DEPT.

# THE MEDICAL SERVICES INSURANCE ACT

and

## THE OPHTHALMIC DISPENSER


A Brief

Submitted to

THE MEDICAL SERVICES INSURANCE ENQUIRY

By

THE ASSOCIATION OF DISPENSING OPTICIANS OF ONTARIO



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# THE MEDICAL SERVICES INSURANCE ACT

and

## THE OPHTHALMIC DISPENSER

### 1. PURPOSE OF THE BRIEF

- (a) To show how the Ophthalmic Dispenser relates to the Medical Services Insurance Act, Bill 163.
- (b) To define what an Ophthalmic Dispenser is and what he does.
- (c) To state the present status of Ophthalmic Dispensing in the Province of Ontario.

### 2. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE BRIEF

- (a) Eye Examination - refraction and diagnosis of diseases and defects of the eye, using drugs where necessary and prescribing corrective lenses or appliances where needed.
- (b) Ophthalmic Dispenser, or Dispensing Optician or simply Optician - a skilled technician who fills the Ophthalmologist's prescription and therefore completes the final stage in the medical eye care program which originates with the Ophthalmologist.
- (c) Ophthalmologist or Oculist - a Physician - a Doctor of Medicine, who specializes in eye examinations, and treats diseases and defects of the eye and all the related structures.





(d) Optometrist - measures the focus of the eye for glasses and supplies glasses on his own prescription. The word Optometry comes from two Greek words, "opto" meaning "eye" and "meter" meaning "measure".

(e) Refraction - is often used interchangeably with Eye Examination.

In actual fact, refraction is the measuring of the focus of the eye, primarily for the prescribing of glasses and refraction in itself is only part of an eye examination.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

In any proposal encompassing complete Medical Care, it is obvious that Eye Care will be an important and integral service.

There are three main groups involved in the field of Eye Care: The Ophthalmologist, the Ophthalmic Dispenser and the Optometrist.

Only the Ophthalmologist has a medical degree and therefore can give a complete eye examination, as defined. To check a child's vision, the use of a cycloplegic drug is essential and symptoms of many other pathological conditions are diagnosed through the ocular manifestations detected by and with his use of drugs.

By accurately filling the Ophthalmologist's prescription, the Ophthalmic Dispenser contributes very greatly to the program of Eye Care for the people of Ontario.





The Optometrist is not permitted to use drugs for testing or for any other purpose and he is not allowed to treat ocular diseases. He offers a partial service in the field of eye care, which is independent of both the Ophthalmologist and the Ophthalmic Dispenser.

#### 4. WHAT AN OPHTHALMIC DISPENSER IS AND WHAT HE DOES

The Ophthalmic Dispenser is an auxiliary to Medicine, who supplies and fits lenses, spectacles, eye-glasses, artificial eyes, contact lenses or appurtenances thereto for the aid or correction of visual or ocular anomalies of the eyes, on the prescription of an Ophthalmologist. He is trained to make the necessary ocular and facial measurements; to make up the glasses or other necessary appliances and to adapt them to the patient. He must have a thorough and comprehensive training in geometrical and physical optics; he must also have a basic knowledge of the anatomy of the eye, the lids and the orbit.

The Ophthalmic Dispenser interprets the Ophthalmologist's prescription and follows the progress of the patient by offering a continuing service of spectacle care. This is designed to maintain the patient at the peak of visual efficiency by making sure his prescription is serving his needs at all times.





5. BACKGROUND OF THE ACT GOVERNING OPHTHALMIC DISPENSERS

In the year 1941, the Ontario Association of Dispensing Opticians was granted a Charter and a study of the legislation governing the group was made. Opticians were licensed under the Ontario Optometry Act of 1937, but this was unsatisfactory, since no Opticians sat on the Optometric Board which governed them.

On December 8, 1961, Bill 111 - 1960-61, an Act respecting Ophthalmic Dispensers was enacted by Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario. The Board of Ophthalmic Dispensers was then appointed by the Hon. Dr. Matthew Dymond to administer the Act.

6. PRIOR TRAINING OF OPHTHALMIC DISPENSER CANDIDATES

Candidates for the training program established by the Board, are drawn from the laboratories of the various Optical Wholesale Houses and of the Ophthalmic Dispensers who operate laboratories. The candidate has thus spent some years learning the manufacturing of lenses, spectacle frames and various appliances. He understands the prismatic imbalance of glass and knows how to mark and check lenses, calibrate their requirements to fit those lenses to frames according to the orders received from the retail trade. (Ophthalmic Dispensers and Optometrists.)

He has had a thorough and comprehensive training in mechanical optics.





## 7. TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF THE OPHTHALMIC DISPENSER

A candidate registers with the Board of Ophthalmic Dispensers of Ontario and works as an apprentice for three years under a qualified Ophthalmic Dispenser on a student license. A portion of his time must be spent in the laboratory and the Dispenser must report to the Board on his progress.

The first year - he will learn how to make the necessary ocular and facial measurements and to fit glasses.

The second year - he is eligible for the Study Course which covers basic studies in light, lenses and the anatomy of the eye.

The third year - the Study Course covers dispensing techniques including all phases of fitting single vision lenses, bifocals, trifocals, aphakic and vocational lenses.

If his work under the licensed Ophthalmic Dispenser has been satisfactory and if he has completed all the assignments, he takes written, oral and practical examinations set up by the Board. The successful candidate will then be registered as an Ophthalmic Dispenser in Ontario.

## 8. POST-GRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Courses on Contact Lenses and Artificial Eyes have been set up by the Board. These are available to all Ophthalmic Dispensers, newly licensed or otherwise, to keep them abreast of the newest developments and procedures in these fields.





A loan library is currently being established to include all the best known publications on Ophthalmic Dispensing.

9. SUMMARY

In summary then, we have shown -

- (a) How the Ophthalmic Dispenser relates to the Medical Services Insurance Act, Bill 163;
- (b) What an Ophthalmic Dispenser is and what he does;
- (c) The present status of Ophthalmic Dispensing in the Province of Ontario.

In the best interests of the people of Ontario, we believe that the only complete Eye Care program is an eye examination by the Ophthalmologist, with the glasses, where necessary, supplied by the Medical Auxiliary, the Ophthalmic Dispenser.

